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Derreck Sunderland C-84327 550-2-40U P.O. Box 9, Avenal, CA 93204



IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Derreck Sunderland, Petitioner, Pro Per

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Case No. C-07-05345 CRB (PR)

OPPOSITION TO MOTION TO DISMISS PETITION

James D. Hartley, Warden, Respondent Judge: The Honorable Charles R. Breyer

Petitioner, Derreck Sunderland, opposes Respondent's Motion to dismiss the petition for writ of habeas corpus and denies that he is in lawful custody of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The petition is not moot; the petition is not successive; and the petition does concern a clearly established federal question.

INTRODUCTION

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The following discussion will address the Respondent's allegations. First, the petition is not successive because petitioner could not have raised the claim at an earlier time. Second, the petition does raise a federal question concerning petitioner's reasonable understanding of the benefits of his plea bargain. Third, the question raised in this petition is not being resolved in In re Rutherford, Super. Ct. Marin County, 2004, SC135399A. Finally, the petition is not moot because petitioner has not received a hearing that comports with due process.

STATEMENT OF RELEVANT FACTS

- 1) On October, 26, 1983, petitioner entered a plea bargain. His attorney stated that he had "advised him of the law as it relates to the facts of his case". (Petn. Ex 1, p.3, RT 32-24-25).
- 2) Prior to the time for Sentencing, petitioner tried to withdraw his plea. On January 13, 1984, a Motion to Withdraw Plea was heard. The judge who presided over the plea proceedings stating, "I thought Mr. Dressler [petitioner's attorney] worked out a very excellent disposition..." (Ex. I, p.1, RT 4:18-19; Motion to Withdraw Plea). Petitioner swore under oath, "I didn't realize what I was looking at". (Ex. I, p.2, RT 8:4). The Motion to Withdraw Plea was denied.

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- 3) On October, 23, 1991, petitioner appeared before the Board of Prison Terms for his Initial Parole Consideration Hearing. Parole was denied.
- 4) On July 9, 2003, petitioner appeared before the Board for his sixth parole hearing. His attorney suggested that the panel order a new psychological evaluation. (Ex II, p.1, BPT RT 25:4-6). Parole was denied for three years
- 5) On July 9, 2006, three years after the three-year denial at the sixth parole hearing, the Board did not conduct the seventh hearing.
- 6) In late August, 2006, petitioner asked about the hearing and was informed that the hearing would be postponed indefinitely.
- 7) On October 3, 2006, petitioner went to his seventh hearing. Commissioner Harris-Ritter postponed the hearing, claiming the need for an up-to-date psychological evaluation. (Petn. Ex 6). Petitioner objected to the postponement.
- 8) On April 9, 2007, 45 months after the July 2003 hearing, petitioner went for an up-to-date psychological evaluation.
- 9) On May 23, 2007, petitioner appeared before the Board for his seventh hearing. The commissioner read the statement of facts into the record, stating,

"The victim threw him [petitioner] against the wall and started getting on top of him". (Ex. III, p.1-2, BPH RT 28:24-25, 29:1).

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The commissioner accepted petitioner's testimony

"...When he grabbed me...when we started struggling, he had gotten on top of me and he was choking me. That's when I pulled out my knife and I just stabbed him". (Ex. III, p.3, BPH RT 36:17-21).

The panel denied parole, stating,

"The victim was sat upon by [petitioner] and stabbed..." (Ex. III,p.3, BPH RT 124:13-14).

THE PETITION IS NOT SUCCESSIVE

In regards to second or successive petitions, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has held:

> "That a prisoner has previously filed a federal habeas petition does not necessarily render a subsequent petition 'second or successive.'"(Hill v. State of Alaska, 297 F.3d 895, 898; (9th Cir.2002) citing In re Cain, 137 F.3d 234 235, (5th Cir.1998) (Per Curium).

"...a prisoner's first petition challenging the calculation of release date should not be deemed successive if the prisoner did not have an opportunity to challenge the state's conduct in a prior petition" (Hill v. State of Alaska, . citing Crouch v. Norris 251 F.3d 720, 725 (8th Cir.2001) (Also see Walker v. Roth, 133 F.3d. 454, 455 (7th Cir.1997) (Per Curium).

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"It also bears noting that the Supreme Court has declined to read § 2244 to preclude prisoners from bringing habeas claims that could not have been brought in earlier petitions See Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 120 S. Ct. 1593" (Hill v. State of Alaska 898)

The claim raised in this petition is distinct from the claim raised in Sunderland v. Mendoza-Powers 1:06-cv-00999 LJO TAG and could not have been raised at the time of filing Sunderland v. Mendoza-Powers. Sunderland v. Mendoza-Powers involves a challenge to the application of some evidence beyond the minimum elements of the stipulated offense to require petitioner to serve a non-bargained-for "more lengthy period of incarceration". (Cal. Pen. Code § 3041(b)). That claim (hereafter the some-evidence challenge) requires resolution of an ambiguous term of the agreement (i.e. "the date of his initial parole" (Petn. Ex.1 p.5, RT 33:9)).

The some-evidence challenge was filed on August 1, 2006, at which time petitioner was still waiting and hoping to attend his seventh hearing. When, in late August, 2006, petitioner realized that the seventh hearing would not be held any time soon, he filed the claim now before this court in the State Superior Court. (hereafter the timely-hearing violation).

Petitioner could not have raised the timely-hearing violation at the time that he raised the some-evidence challenge because he

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was required to first attempt to resolve the issue in the state courts. If he had waited to file the some-evidence challenge until after he had exhausted state court remedies on the timely-hearing violation, then he would have risked an untimely procedural default on the some-evidence challenge.

If a plea bargain is induce by various benefits, then the plea bargain can be violated in various ways. "[I]f the expression 'second or successive' were interpreted too liberally, it would 'all but foreclose challenges to the constitutionally of the execution of [] sentences'". (Hill v. State of Alaska, 899; quoting Crouch v. Norris, 251 F.3d 720, 722.). Likewise, it would allow the state to violate the plea bargain by the manner in which it executes the agreed-upon sentence.

Accordingly, since the district court has never addressed the timely-hearing violation, and since this issue could not have been raised at an earlier time, the petition is not successive, and petitioner was not obligated to secure [the court of appeals] permission prior to filing his habeas petition in the district court". (Hill v State of Alaska, 899). Therefore, Respondent's Motion to dismiss the habeas petition should be denied.

Since petitioner entered his plea bargain in San Francisco County, within the Northern District of California, this court retains jurisdiction over his claim. When, in October 2007, petitioner filed the timely-hearing violation in the Northern

1. District of California, the some-evidence challenge had been filed 2. in the Eastern District of California for over 14 months without 3. an order for response. As a result, petitioner began questioning 4. whether he had erroneously filed the some-evidence challenge in 5. the Eastern District. Since then, a response has been ordered on 6. the some-evidence challenge, but the claim has not yet been 7. 8. adjudicated on the merits. 9. 10. 11. 12.

THE PETITION RAISES A FEDERAL QUESTION

The question is not whether the State is violating state law. That is not in dispute. The question is: Does the State's failure to follow state law in the execution of an agreed-upon sentence violate the agreement? This is a federal question. Santobello v. New York, 404 U.S. 257 (1971)?

Suppose a hypothetical defendant is offered a plea bargain whereby the State agrees to a sentence of 16 years to life. The defendant's attorney researches the law and learns that the release date shall normally be set at the Initial Parole Consideration Hearing, and in those abnormal cases when the release date is not normally set, timely subsequent hearings shall be held according to the law. The attorney concludes from his research that as a result of the plea bargain, the hearings will be held sooner rather than later. Thus, the State's offer seems to be a very excellent disposition. He then advises his client,

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saying, "The offer is a good deal". Upon this advice, the defendant accepts the State's offer and is sentenced to 16 years to life in accordance with the agreement. However, during the execution of his sentence, the State does not proceed according to the law, thus, depriving the defendant of the "good deal".

Is such a defendant not entitled to federal relief under Santobello v. New York? On the one hand, the State only agreed to the sentence. The State never promised to follow state law in the execution of that sentence. On the other hand, since the State did not proceed according to the law, then, contrary to the defendant's reasonable understanding, the plea bargain was not such a "good deal".

Petitioner entered the plea bargain upon the advice of his counsel. But would counsel have advised Petitioner to enter the plea bargain if he had known that the State would not follow state law in the execution of the agreed-upon sentence?

Prior to Sentencing, petitioner tried to withdraw his plea, asserting, "I didn't realize what I was looking at". (Ex. I, p.2 RT 8:4). The judge denied the Motion to Withdraw Plea because he thought that the disposition was "very excellent". (Ex. I, p.1, RT 4:19). But would the judge have denied the Motion to Withdraw Plea if he had known that the State would not follow state law in the execution of the agreed-upon sentence?

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If the State is allowed to violate state law in the execution of an agreed-upon sentence, then such violation undercuts the basis for the agreement and renders the benefits ilusory, thus violating due process. (U.S. v. Franco-Lopez, 312 F.3d 984, 991; (9th Cir.2002), citing U.S. v. Dillon, 307 F.2d 445. (9th Cir.1962). This is a federal question. The question is: Does the State's failure to follow state law in the execution of an agreed-upon sentence violate the agreement? That is the question the Respondent did not answer.

IN RE RUTHERFORD IS NOT RESOLVING THE ISSUE PRESENTED IN THIS PETITION

In re Rutherford, SC135399A, is a habeas corpus petition that was filed in the Marin County Superior Court in 2004 where it is still pending. It is an attempt to compel the Board to proceed in accordance with state law. Whether or not the Rutherford Case is successful in achieving its goal is not the issue in this habeas corpus. So, assuming that the Rutherford case does eventually succeed in compelling the Board to proceed in accordance with state law, then petitioner will eventually receive a fair hearing, but it will be later rather than sooner.

THE CLAIM IS NOT MOOT

The Respondent asserts that because petitioner received a hearing on May 23, 2007, the claim is moot. (Ans. P.4, lines 14-

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16). However, the assertion begs several questions. How can an untimely hearing take the place of a timely hearing? More importantly, was the May 2007 hearing a fair hearing?

Can claim become unmoot?

The May 2007 hearing (the seventh hearing) is being challenged in the state court as arbitrary because the reasons for the denial have no evidentiary basis in fact. For example, during the hearing but before the decision, the commissioner read the Statement of Facts into the record. The commissioner acknowledged that;

The victim threw him [petitioner] against the wall and started getting on top of him. (Ex. III, p.1 $^{-}$ 2, BPH RT 28:24-25, 29:1).

The commissioner accepted petitioner's testimony;

"...When he grabbed me...when we started struggling, he had gotten on top; of me and he was choking me. That's when I pulled out my knife and I just stabbed him". (Ex. III, p.3, BPH RT 36:17-21).

The panel denied parole, stating,

"The victim was sat upon by [petitioner] and stabbed..." (Ex. III, p.3, BPH RT 124:13-14).

The accepted Statement of Facts has always indicated that the victim was on top of petitioner when the stabbing began. That is

until the May 2007 decision to deny parole when the panel stated, "The victim was sat upon by [petitioner] and stabbed..."

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The difference between the victim being on top of petitioner and petitioner being on top of the victim when the stabbing began is significant in that the latter scenario indicates a greater degree of malicious intent by suggesting that petitioner had overpowered the victim before he stabbed him. That is not true. Therefore, the May 2007 decision to deny parole is based at least in part on a false premise and should be reversed on this ground alone.¹

The Respondent claims that petitioner "has received the only effective relief that he can be granted-a new parole hearing that comports with due process" (Ans. P.4, lines 16-17). But what if the May 2007 hearing is reversed for violating due process? Is petitioner then only entitled to another, even more untimely hearing by the same administrative agency (The Board) that has "operated under a sub rose policy that all murderers be found unsuitable for parole? (Coleman v. BPT cv-96-0783 LKK PAN P. (Petn. Ex. 8, p.3, lines 1-4; Also see In re Criscione No. 71614, Petn. Ex. 9). And what if all future subsequent hearings are eventually vacated, one by one, for violating due process? When will petitioner receive the "very excellent disposition" (Ex. I

¹ Petitioner is challenging the May 2007 denial as arbitrary for other, more general reasons.

RT 4:19) that he bargained for? When will petitioner at least

receive a hearing by a panel that recognizes that the various

Penal Code Sections were designed to function in harmony with one

another, and that unless release dates are normally set (Cal. Pen.

Code § 3041(a)), the backlog of subsequent hearings will continue

to grow, depriving parole applicants such as petitioner of the

reasonable understanding that the agreed-upon sentences will be

case"? (Petn. Ex 1, p.3, RT 32-24-25). And why should petitioner

executed according to the "law as it relates to the facts of [the]

not be allowed to revive his timely Motion to Withdraw Plea? These

are some of the questions that the Respondent should be required

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to answer.

For all the aforementioned reasons, the Motion to Dismiss the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus should be denied.

Petitioner swares under the Penalty of perjury that the facts in this document

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Respectfully submitted,

Derreck Sunderland, Petitioner Pro Per

are true as he believes them to be.

Dated: 5-6-08

Derreck Sunderland C-84327 550-2-40U P.O. Box 9 Avenal, CA 93204

THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Derreck Sunderland, Petitioner Pro per

Case No. C-07-05345 CRB PR

٧.

Traverse to Respondent's Answer to petition

James D. Hartley, Warden, Respondent

> Judge: The Honorable Charles R. Breyer

Petitioner submits this traverse and reasserts all of the allegations contained in the original petition for writ of habeas corpus.

Petitioner denies that he is in lawful custody of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Petitioner denies that the petition is moot, a successive petition or that the petition does not involve questions of federal law.

Petitioner alleged that the Board's failure to conduct a timely subsequent hearing was the result of a backlog of overdue hearings which is the result of an illegal policy to normally deny parole. (Petn. p. 12, lines 19-28; p. 13, lines 22-26). The Respondent did not contest these allegations.

Petitioner submitted Coleman v. BPT Civ-S-96-0783 LKK PAN P. (Ex 8) and In re Criscione, Santa Clara Superior Court, No. 71614 (Ex 9). Petitioner claimed the information in these cases provides evidence that the Board's policy created the backlog of overdue hearings which is now depriving petitioner of a timely hearing. Petitioner further contends that the uncontested information in these two cases provides clear and convincing evidence that petitioner was telling the truth in 1984 when he swore under oath, "I didn't realize what I was looking at." (Ex I p. 2, RT 8:4).

Petitioner asserted and reasserts that the law sets forth the terms of the plea agreement, (Petn. p. 14, lines 21-28; p. 15, lines 1-2). Petitioner asserted and reasserts that the law was violated during the execution of his sentence. The Respondent did not deny these allegations.

In conclusion, if the law sets forth the terms of the agreement and the law has been violated, then the plea agreement has been violated.

For the foregoing reasons, petitioner respectfully requests that this Court grant the writ or order the Respondent to answer the questions raised in the petition and this traverse.

Respectfully submitted,

ck Sunderland, tioner Pro Per

Dated: 5-6-08

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit I--Excerpts from the MOtion to Withdraw Plea, January 13, 1984

Exhibit II--Excerpts from the Sixth hearing, July 9, 2003

Exhibit III -- Excerpts from the seventh hearing, May 23, 2007.

Petn. Ex 1, Plea agreement, October 26, 1983;

Petn. Ex 8 Coleman v. BPT CV-96-0783 (2005)

Petn. 9 In re Criscione, Santa Clara Superior Court, No. 71614 (2007)

EXHIBIT

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acceptance of your plea at this time is not binding on the Court.

If the Court withdraws its approval at the time of sentencing

you will be allowed to take back your guilty plea and enter a

plea of not guilty if you wish to do so."

It was never accepted. That is the day of acceptance, four weeks from that date, and it was not accepted. That's the way the formation of the contract is made. There is no acceptance.

MR. SWEETERS: We submit the matter.

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THE COURT: You are straining it, Mr. Manzella, you are straining it.

MR. MANZELLA: The only thing, your Honor, is that is what Santabella said -- It is a contract -- and when you look at the section itself it says that it should be construed liberally. That means if the defendant wants to get off and have it unaccepted he should be allowed to restore it under Dellas to the previous charges.

THE COURT: I heard the preliminary hearing evidence in this case and it was very strong, and personally I thought Mr. Dressler worked out a very excellent disposition of this matter on behalf of Mr. Sunderland. He could well end up with a more serious charge being proved against him if it went to trial. I see no reason to set aside this plea.

You have presented no evidence other than your allegation here that the matter wasn't accepted by Judge Campilongo, and I cannot buy that argument.

The motion to withdraw the plea --

MR. MANZELLA: Okay. If your Honor is not ready to accept it, the other thing is the defendant has some reasoning why there was

EXHIBIT VIII

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| THE COURT | sa That | SS | ustained. |
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| | | 3 3 | as datified. |

- MP. MANZELLA: Q And did you know what was being done to you at the end of the preliminary hearing?
- No. Indidn't realize what I was looking at. He set me off.

 MR. MANZELLA: I don't have anything further.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

7 BY MR. SWEETERS:

- Mr. Sunderland, do you remember that your preliminary hearing was scheduled for October 25; is that correct?
- 10 A Yes.

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- And you were sitting in court, were you not, when evidence was presented at that preliminary hearing; is that right?
- 13 | A Yes, but --
- 14 Q Is that right?

- A. Yes.
- 15 And when the Coroner testified you knew it was the Coroner,
 16 didn't you?

 L I didn't know who
- 17 | it was.

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- MR. MANZELLA: I don't see what the relevancy of this is,
 what went down at the preliminary hearing. The question is
 whether or not it was an intelligent waiver and understanding.
- 21 THE COURT: I think that's what he is leading to. He is
 22 laying a foundation. Your objection is overruled.
- MR. SWEETERS: Q Mr. Sunderland, was the preliminary hearing conducted in the morning or the afternoon?
- 25 A I think it was in the morning.
- 26 Q. And you weren't under the influence of any alcohol at that
- 27 | time, were you? A. No.
 - Q. You hadn't been taking any medication, had you?

EXHIBIT

II

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- 1 did note the psych report is four years old.
- DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BACHLOR: Yes, it
- 3 is.
- 4 ATTORNEY CHRISTENSEN: So I do hope that
- 5 you will, at the conclusion, request a more
- 6 recent, updated report --
- 7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BACHLOR: Okay.
- 8 ATTORNEY CHRISTENSEN: -- completed on
- 9 this inmate.
- 10 **DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BACHLOR:** All right,
- 11 that's fair. All right, let's go to your
- 12 parole plans. According to your Board report,
- 13 if parole is granted, you wanted to self-parole
- 14 to Las Vegas where your brother, Larry
- 15 Sunderland, resides?
- 16 INMATE SUNDERLAND: Well, I understand
- 17 that that's going to be difficult to do that,
- 18 you know, immediately. I've been -- we're
- 19 trying to work on an interstate transfer to
- 20 Nevada where I'll be in a Nevada prison. That
- 21 hasn't -- I haven't gone very far on that. My
- 22 counselors won't help me out with that. If I
- 23 parole to San Francisco, I wrote Delancey
- 24 Street and I got a letter back and I gave it to
- 25 my counselor, Ms. Orozco. I don't know if it's
- 26 there. I haven't gotten a letter back. In
- 27 this pamphlet, it really talks about the

EXHIBIT

| Τ. | misdemeanor charges on 6/4/83. The |
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| 2 | murder investigation that was being |
| 3 | conducted by the San Francisco Police |
| 4 | Department was focused on him. SFPD |
| 5 | inspectors went to the county jail, and |
| 6 | the defendant voluntarily acknowledged |
| 7 | that he stabbed the victim. After being |
| 8 | read his Miranda rights, Mr. Sunderland |
| 9 | said he met with the victim and the |
| 10 | victim asked him if he had a place to |
| 11 | stay. They rented a motel room. At this |
| 12 | point the at this point the victim |
| 13 | wanted the defendant to engage in |
| 14 | homosexual acts. The defendant said he |
| 15 | became nervous. Both men went downstairs |
| 16 | to a store, where the victim bought the |
| 17 | defendant a sandwich and a beer, and they |
| 18 | returned to the room and went to bed. |
| 19 | The defendant and the said that the |
| 20 | when he thought that the victim was |
| 21 | asleep, he tried to get the victim's |
| 22 | wallet. The victim got up and started |
| 23 | grabbing the defendant, and pulled him |
| 24 | back into the bed. The victim threw up |
| 25 | threw him against the wall and started |

| 1 | getting on top of him. The defendant |
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| 2 | said that he stabbed the victim with a |
| 3 | pocketknife that he carries. Defendant |
| 4 | admitted to the police that the shirt |
| 5 | found in the at the scene belonged to |
| 6 | him, described the inside of the room to |
| 7 | the satisfaction of the homicide |
| 8 | inspectors, and said that he had been |
| 9 | taking LSD the day of the the stabbing |
| 10 | took place." |
| 11 | Okay. So that now what what differences do you |
| 12 | have with regard to this I assume that part of it has |
| 13 | to do with the number of stab wounds, is that |
| 14 | INMATE SUNDERLAND: Yes. |
| 15 | PRESIDING COMMISSIONER PRIZMICH: Okay. |
| 16 | INMATE SUNDERLAND: There are some more things. |
| 17 | PRESIDING COMMISSIONER PRIZMICH: Okay. Could |
| 18 | you could you talk about that a little bit, sir? |
| 19 | INMATE SUNDERLAND: Okay. Well, they said that |
| 20 | it that the crime was committed in an especially |
| 21 | cruel and callous manner. Seems to me that implies that |
| 22 | I'm trying to torture him. I really wasn't trying to |
| 23 | to torture him. I panicked and he we we struggled |
| 24 | for the knife. |
| 25 | PRESIDING COMMISSIONER PRIZMICH: Uh-huh. |

1 left common artery. "There were a total of 25 stab 2 and/or slash wounds to the victim's body. The defendant was arrested on numerous misdemeanor charges on 6/4/83. 3 4 The murder investigation was being conducted by the San 5 Francisco Police Department, and it was focused on him. 6 San Francisco Police Inspectors went to the county jail, 7 and the defendant voluntarily acknowledged that he 8 stabbed the victim. After being read his Miranda 9 rights, Mr. Sutherland [sic] stated that he met the 10 victim. The victim asked him if he had a place to stay. 11 They then went upstairs to a motel room, and an argument 12 ensued after Mr. Sutherland -- Sunderland attempted to 13 remove money from the victim, and the victim was sat 14 upon by Mr. Sunderland and stabbed with an approximately three or four inch pocket knife a number of times." We 15 16 note that there have been -- the prisoner has been involved in previous crimes, in that he served time in 17 18 Texas for manslaughter of very similar circumstances wherein the victim was stabbed to death there. At the 19 time of this crime the -- Mr. Sunderland was -- had 20 skipped parole and was essentially on the run, living on 21 the streets. So we find that he has a record of 22 assaultive or violent behavior in the past. He has a 23 continuing pattern of violence. He has a history of 24

D. SUNDERLAND C-84327 DECISION PAGE 2 5/23/07

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Derreck Sunderland

PRINT NAME OF DECLARANT

Derreck Sunderland C-84327 SSO-3-406 P.O. Box 9 Averal, CA 93204

Northern District of Califori 450 Golden Gate Avenue District Court 3 fice of the Clerk

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